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Biomass Program

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Abstract	This paper reports that biomass encompasses agricultural and forestry residues, woody and herbaceous energy crops, municipal solid waste, and underutilized traditional forests. The contribution of biomass to the nation's energy supply stands at 3.1 quads per year and is continuing to grow. Increasing our use of fuels derived from biomass can improve air quality, mitigate global warming, reduce dependency on foreign oil imports, and strengthen a weak farm economy. The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Biofuels and Municipal Waster Technology Program has focuses mainly on liquid fuels such as ethanol, methanol, biocrude-derived gasoline, and plant-oil-derived diesel fuel, with some emphasis on gaseous fuels such as biogas. Researchers have improved the economics of the wood to ethanol process to approximately $1.35/gas by developing a method to ferment ethanol from the xylose fraction of wood with greater than 70% efficiency. The program goal of $0.60/gal would provide ethanol at a competitive cost without tax credits. DOE has increased the emphasis on cooperative ventures with industry and is developing plans for a cost-shared project to scale up gasification technologies for both syngas and methanol fuel production testing.
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Exhibit IV